



## **Building Bridges with Language**

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### **Abstract**

The development of Web 2.0 has led to the appearance of collaborative writing tools, including wikis and blogs. Wikis are particularly adept to collaboration among groups of users, as all members can edit content at any time as well as comment peer work on every page. This paper aims to describe and analyze the application and use of collaborative tools, namely a wiki and, at a later stage, google docs, within a virtual exchange project between students attending a Portuguese and an Iranian university. The project entitled Building Bridges with Language has a threefold objective: raise awareness to differences and similarities between cultures and perspectives on life among university students in several countries and thus promote tolerance; enhance not only student writing and speaking skills but also their autonomy in the use of English language; and, finally, develop students' critical thinking towards learning. In group, students are required to create products using online tools such as Voicethread or Microsoft Photostory. These products are then shared with their foreign counterparts. Based on the information provided by the students' audiovisual projects and on virtual interaction, Portuguese and Iranian students write articles which will be published on an online magazine created for the project. Through the wiki and google docs, educators are able to monitor the students' learning progress and, simultaneously, students become consciously and actively a part of the evaluation process.